

# Basic Nutrients

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Eating a balanced diet is an important factor for a healthy life. One requires as many as 40 nutrients for energy and normal growth in addition to water, which is very crucial for survival.

The ideal diet is one that keeps one fit and with a feeling of well-being, but not over/under fed, and which gradually educates one to like the foods that are good for them and avoid those which make one put on weight rapidly. It is surprising how much one's eating habits can change once tried. Women who have given up sweets for quite a long time rarely find they want to eat very much of them even when their diet ends! One may ask.

What are the foods that are good for us?

Carbohydrates, proteins and fats - so called energy nutrients - provide fuel in the form of calories.

## PROTEINS

- Proteins support growth and repair of tissue and help produce antibodies, hormones and enzymes, all essential for chemical reactions in the body.
- Protein sources in the diet include meat, fish, dairy products, poultry, dried beans, lentils, nuts and eggs.
- The diet that is deficient in protein very speedily results in feeling tired and listless.

## FATS

Fats are generally found in butter, cheese, cream, margarine, cooking oil etc. Dietary fat protects internal organs, provides energy,

insulates against cold.

There are three kinds of fats :

- Saturated found in meat, dairy food and coconut oil
- Monosaturated found in olive, peanut and canola oils and
- Polyunsaturated found in corn, cottonseed, safflower, soy and sunflower oils.
- If fats are completely cut one loses a lot of resistance to colds and the skin suffers.

## CARBOHYDRATES

Carbohydrates, the body's main energy source, are divided into two types: simple carbohydrates (ie sugars) and complex carbohydrates (ie starches, found in flour, potatoes and bread), the sugars in sweets, honey, jams, and of course sugar itself.

If these are completely cut, one is inclined to feel tired more readily and also to feel cold.

In addition the diet also supplies important micronutrients called the vitamins and minerals. Even though they are needed only in very small amounts, the absence or deficiency of just one vitamin or mineral does cause major illness. The body also needs a supply of the indigestible portion of plant foods. A high fiber diet reduces the risks of various gastrointestinal problems and promotes cardiovascular health.

The vitamins contained in fresh fruits and vegetables assist in keeping one well and healthy.

A young lady came home from a date, rather sad. She told her mother, "Jeff proposed to me an hour ago." "Then why are you so sad?" her mother asked.

"Because he also told me he was an atheist. Mom, he doesn't even believe there's a hell."

Her mother replied, "Marry him anyway. Between the two of us, we'll show him how wrong he is."

